

Prairies of Possibilities

New and Selected Poems

Duane L. Herrmann

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Notes

SPRING LAKE

Sitting on the rocks
on the edge of the lake,
the water gently claps
into holes and spaces.

The breeze bringing waves
brings ancient sounds
that have survived
the post-columbian age:

Thumping, thumping, rhythmic thumping
drums and chants:
in clear and ringing tones
through the opposite trees.

The chants of America:
native words in native voices,
five hundred years endured,
proudly raised once more.

In the clear evening sky
the night queen sails,
smiles on children of the moon,
knowing they will shine once more.

SUMMER WETTING

The heat had been forever:
constant oven-wind
shriveled leaves and trees.

Cemented soil cracked
in canyons reaching deep
into the tortured earth.

No rain for more than weeks;
moisture only dimly
a faint and fragrant memory.

Suddenly from far away
echoed muffled rumblings,
and low dark clouds.

Salvation seemed too true
to suspend parched lips
or slack dry skin.

Eyes watched with hope and wonder
as clouds relieved the sky
from the searing sun.

A miraculous wall of wet
advanced across the fields
and, suddenly, was here.

God was good again.
Steady showering filled
pores and cracks and leaves.

The crops and life and animals
were saved. The family
would survive another year.

PRAIRIE HAWK

Over the fields and prairie
creeks and tree lines
endless miles
of countryside,
I survey my domain,
All MINE! All MINE!
The wind past my eyes
lifts me up or down.
A sound carries
on the wind
and I know
food is near.
I see motion
and swoop down,
the meal...
will be mine.

AH!
Life is good!

NIGHT VISITS

The little child slept
his troubled sleep
when panic woke him in the dark
feeling little feet
(and brush of wings),
sure the wasps would sting.

Too terrified to scream
or move, or even breathe,
the midnight seconds passed.

Bedroom windows had no screens
and wasps would fly inside
looking for a home.

Sometimes they found his face
or dropt
little balls of mud.

Little feet were crawling
on him;
tiny little feet:
on his face,
across his cheek.

WINTER'S LAST STAND

This has become a day of ice;
 window screens opaqued.
Ice trees near are silver,
 silent,
 gripped with death;
Weeds and grasses frozen
 fragments
 of living yesterdays:
Winter's Last Stand.

A few days more: Náv-Ruz
 And Spring.
An icy day of winter to remind us
 of the past.
The new year is resistless,
 as is the Day of God.

LIGHTLY TREADING

To be respectful of The Mother
we must step lightly
when walking on her.

Our treading must not be
a cause of sorrow or disruption;
for others must pass too.

Behind us we must leave
a trail of Beauty -
in faces, places and planets;

A Trail of Beauty to resound
in Glory dancing on the waves
of human tracing.

SUN MAGNIFICENT

Bahá'u'lláh:
the Sun Magnificent,
has rearranged the soul
and body and heart
of generations.

Dynamic destinies await
those millions who
fling themselves into the Sun -
becoming stars.

Hesitation kills
the soul in some degrees
Run! Leap! Jump!
Into life with God!

Bahá'u'lláh fulfills
the ancient need
and mystic union
with absolute reality
and sacredness.

Exaltation rings
from one so unattached;
transcendent,
leaving self
and nothingness.

Bahá'u'lláh, the Sun
consumes, renews, transforms
the dust
into Magnificence!

STEADFASTNESS

Toward the building of a world
that no one knows
and cannot see,
not even you or me.

A world beyond our farthest dreams –
but dreams can clash
and so can we.

A world beyond description –
but still our goal and aim;
we falter on –

one step at a time
we stumble and still
yet continue,
against all odds –

Toward the building of a world
that no one knows
and cannot see,
not even you, or me.

SAY, "PEACE."

They say, "Peace,"

- with a club.

They say, "Peace,"

- with a sword.

They say, "Peace,"

- with a gun.

They say, "Peace,"

- with a bomb.

They say, "Peace,"

- with a missile.

And - there - is - no - peace - at - all;

it cannot be forced

it must be created.

When, "Peace," is called

- with a pen,

- will they listen?

"O Rulers of the earth!

Be reconciled among your selves..."

"O Representatives of the people,

Take ye council together..."

Thus sayeth unto you,

the Pen of the Most High:

"These fruitless strifes,

these ruinous wars

shall pass away,

and the Most Great Peace

shall come."

Comments on the poetry of Duane L. Herrmann:

"I prize your book ("Whispers Shouting Glory"); it reaches out for the elements of our lives and does so in a context I know and cherish myself."

- "Bill" (William Stafford)

"(your) poems are very clear and uncluttered, which makes them most appealing; there is nothing contrived or artificial in them and the poetic voice is unaffected and pure."

- Roger White

"Your work shows a warm sensibility, a feeling hand, a well-honed innocence. You have a joyful sense of play that exalts in your world, in God's world.

- all sheer Herrmann."

- Michael Fitzgerald

"... many original ideas and incisive ways of looking at subjects."

- Robert Stockman